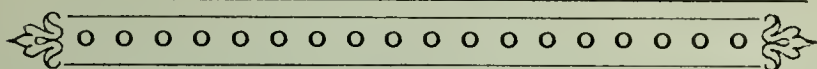


5109. Butler, F. J.



SKETCH

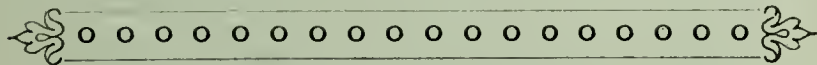
OF

FANNY JANE BUTLER, M. D.

BY

Mrs. J. T. Gracey.

PRICE, Three Cents.




WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
36 BROMFIELD STREET, BOSTON, MASS.



FANNY JANE BUTLER, M. D.

First Medical Woman to Kashmir.



Dr. Fanny Butler had the distinction of being the first fully equipped medical missionary woman sent to India from England. She entered upon her work in 1880, and her first destination was Jabalpur, in the Central Provinces. But owing to a series of complications, she remained only a short time, then removed to Bhagalpur, where she spent four and a half years, throwing her whole heart into the work. She had charge of two dispensaries, and attended to several thousand patients annually. In 1887 she returned home for a short furlough, when she accepted the appointment to Kashmir, leading the way to specific work among the women of that beautiful valley.

“Beautiful valley, a garden of God!
Thy wealth is the grain beneath the sod;
A corn of wheat, 't is fallen and dead,
The sheaves will come, as the Master said.”

It is interesting to note the leadings in this direction. Dr. William Elmslie entered that valley as the first medical missionary. It was his appeal for women missionaries that determined Miss

Butler's missionary longings in the direction of a thorough medical equipment. They were both in an eminent degree fitted to be pioneers, gifted with the cool judgment, the clear decision, the pertinacious insistence, the indomitable energy of true leaders. Better still, they were both of them little children in the simplicity of their faith, and in the reality of their spiritual life.

We turn now from the field of labor that we may sketch something of her early life, and preparation for work. Miss Butler was born October 5, 1850, in Chelsea, England. She was one of a large home circle, in which mutual affection was peculiarly developed. With the exception of a year when she was six, and a few months a little later, Fanny Butler had to be content with the instructions of her elder sisters till she was fourteen and a half years. Then she had one good year at the West London College, being at its close first in every one of the eight subjects for which marks were given. The stoppage of her school life at this period was the heaviest trouble she had known. An intense thirst for knowledge was always upon her. Religious subjects always interested her, though little was known of her personal feelings till she was just thirteen. A sermon at this time, "Son, go work in my vineyard," came home with power. Her reserve broke down, and those who loved her best and watched her most closely had no doubt that at this period she had intelligently received Christ, and given herself to His service.

At fourteen she became a Sabbath-school teacher,

and the following year she was confirmed. Her confirmation time seems to have been one of much blessing, and all doubts as to her relation with God were removed.

Her attention was early directed to missions through the influence of her pastor, whose enthusiasm was infectious.

In 1872 Miss Butler went to nurse a married sister. There she met with missionaries from China who recognized in her the true missionary spirit, and urged on her the claims of that country. Then it was that for the first time she broke the silence to her parents, and wrote to them asking their approval. Their answer was a disapproval of the proposed particular step, accompanied by an expression of their willingness that at some future time her missionary desire should be fulfilled. Shortly afterwards Dr. Elmslie's appeal for Woman's Medical Missions came into the hands of the sister she was nursing, and she passed it to her with the remark, "This is the work for you." She looked it over, and her answer was, "I could not do it. I do not care for the medical women's movement." Soon, however, she came back to the bedside, and said in a very different tone, "This may be the work that is meant for me. I will send the paper to A. and see what she says." Characteristically enough, she did this without a word from herself. Promptly the answer came: "This seems the very work for you; the training for it would develop the abilities God has given you, and would enable you to become the very best kind of

missionary." A second application home, this time to take up medical missionary work, was met with an unqualified "Yes."

She was accepted by the Indian Female Normal Society, and at once went to work and passed in an examination second out of 123 candidates, 119 of whom were men, and was entered at the opening of the Women's School of Medicine in October, 1874, as the first enrolled student of the school.

She was a student of the first order, and she received very flattering testimonies from her examiners of the high character of her work. She went to the King's and Queen's College of Physicians in Dublin, having opened to women its examinations for her final examination and was told by one of the professors that her paper was the best one he had ever had from any candidate.

Thus equipped she started for India as we have noted and spent seven years, then returned home on furlough. She accepted then the appointment to Kashmir, and returning in August, 1888, she rented a little house in the centre of Srinagar, the chief city of the valley, opened a dispensary, when the work pressed upon her from every direction.

The first year five thousand patients attended, and at least two thousand heard the gospel. Then another house was taken for a hospital. The missionaries could visit the city, but residence was forbidden and she was four miles from her work. Finally through Miss Butler's efforts the native government's resistance was overcome, and as much ground in an excellent position was obtained as

was necessary for dispensary, hospital and mission house. About the same time also a lady warmly interested in all medical mission work, Mrs. Bishop (Miss Isabella Bird), was visiting Kashmir, and gave a sum of money to be used for the purpose of building a woman's hospital. Miss Butler was missionary and physician. She dressed wounds, dispensed medicine, performed surgical operations, read, prayed, talked to the suffering, pointed all to the great Healer of souls. She finally took her patients one by one into an upper room. One of the helpers writes: "I make my way with difficulty up stairs, to receive my instructions from the brave, presiding genius of the place, the Doctor Miss Sahib. Here she is, sitting at her table, with a little collection of poor sufferers at her feet. They will look up in her face, with clasped hands, and say, 'We heard your fame, and have come far, far;' and again the words came back, 'I have compassion on the multitude, for divers of them came from far.'"

The strain, however, was too great and her health began to give way. In the summer she was ill and unable to do her work, and as soon as she recovered, she took an itinerating trip, but not for rest. She writes, "When we encamped, crowds of wretched women and children collected, begging for medicine, and I do not think any one could imagine the dirt and disease which we found everywhere." When the fall came she was suffering and was prevented from being present when the foundation stone of the new hospital

building was laid. She continued to grow worse, and it became evident she must 'relinquish the work so dear to her. Mrs. Bishop who visited her in her isolated home wrote: "Just before the death of Dr. Fannie Butler, it was a terrible sight to see the way in which the women pressed upon her at the dispensary door, which was kept by two men outside and another inside. The crush was so great as sometimes to overpower the men and precipitate the women bodily into the consulting room. The evil odors, the heat, the unsanitary conditions in which Miss Butler did her noble work of healing and telling of the Healer of souls were, I believe, the cause of the sacrifice of her life."

Her mind remained clear, and her cheerful interest in everything never ceased. Her last thought was for the work she loved, and her dying wish was that her post might be speedily filled. It was October 26, 1889, when the end came. One associated with her wrote: "We laid her dear remains to rest in the little cemetery on Monday morning, in a quiet corner under the shade of a large chenar tree. The same little boat and boatmen which had so often taken her to work in her hospital, bore her quietly down the river to her resting-place. Our native servants begged the honor of bearing her from the boat to the grave; 'They had eaten her salt, and no other arms must bear her.' Every resident and visitor was present to show the true and heartfelt respect which all felt for her."

"She rests from her labors and her works do follow her."

Her influence has been felt not only in the beautiful Kashmir Valley, but in the adjacent country of Tibet.

Biographical Sketches.



William Carey .....	.03
Mrs. Doremus .....	.03
Fidelia Fiske .....	.03
Isabel Hart .....	.25
Mary Lyon .....	.03
Mrs. Mullens .....	.03
Melinda Rankin .....	.03
Charlotte M. Tucker (A. L. O. E.) .....	.03
Mrs. Harriet M. Warren .....	.05
Pandita Ramabai .....	.05
Fanny J. Butler, M. D. ....	.03
Hannah Marshman .....	.03

For all the above, address

PAULINE J. WALDEN,

36 Bromfield St., Boston, Mass.